

Pay Progression Recommendations for 2016
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Common Council File # 151209
Department of Employee Relations
December 8, 2015

1. What positions do the salary adjustments provisions apply to?

Employees who are in positions that are part of an approved Career Ladder or who are represented by a public safety union are not eligible for the recommended salary adjustment provisions. In general, employee groups covered by the proposals are:

Group A

Eligible employees who achieve a “good standing” status per guidelines developed by the DER and documented on an “Employee Assessment “ form for positions in one of the following sections of the Salary Ordinance:

Section 3 – Technicians

Section 5 – Paraprofessionals

Section 6 – Administrative Support

Section 7 – Skilled Craft

Section 8 – Service & Maintenance (*Excluding Operations Driver Workers represented by the Milwaukee Operations Driver Worker Union, Inc.*)

Group B

Eligible employees who, based on merit principles, achieve a “fully satisfactory” or “outstanding” rating per guidelines developed by the DER and documented on a performance appraisal in positions classified as:

Section 1 - Officials and Administrators

Section 2 - Professionals

Section 4 - Protective Service (non- represented sworn)

2. These increases are not considered cost of living adjustments. What is the impact of that?

The impact is that pay range minimums and maximums will not be adjusted. Salaries may be adjusted per eligibility criteria established in the Salary Ordinance and by administrative guidelines developed by DER. DER will only recommend adjusting pay range minimums and maximums when necessitated by labor market considerations such as the City’s ability to recruit and retain qualified candidates.

3. What is the effective date of the changes?

The effective date of the provisions of the Salary Ordinance, if approved by the Common Council, will be 10 days after passage and publication. Implementation of salary adjustments for eligible employees will occur in 2016 and the effective dates vary by group.

4. What is the effective date of the salary adjustments?

For Group A, determination of an employee's eligibility will be made near or on the employee's anniversary date. The salary adjustment, when granted, will be retroactive to Pay Period 1 of 2016.

Salary adjustments for eligible employees in Group B will be effective as follows. Employees with salary anniversary dates between Pay Periods 1 through 13 will be evaluated in Pay Period 14. The salary adjustments, if granted, will be effective Pay Period 14. Employees with salary anniversary dates between Pay Period 14 and 26, will be evaluated on or near their anniversary date but the salary adjustment, if granted, will be effective Pay Period 14 of 2016. It is the intent of this provision to make salary adjustments for this group effective no earlier than Pay Period 14 of 2016. Lump sum payments due to eligible employees will be paid in accordance with guidelines developed and administered by DER.

5. What is a Salary Anniversary Date? When does it change?

An employee's original salary anniversary date is established 26 pay periods of active service after appointment to a position. A new anniversary date is established upon promotion or demotion. The salary anniversary date shall be adjusted after 10 or more work days off the payroll. A denial of a salary adjustment may establish a new anniversary date as specified under guidelines developed by DER.

6. What is the amount of the increase for each group?

Group A

Eligible employees shall receive a salary adjustment that is 2% of the minimum of the pay range, or the minimum recruitment rate as footnoted in the corresponding pay range.

Group B

Eligible employees shall receive a salary adjustment based on their rating as specified below under a performance merit plan established by DER.

- i. 2% of the midpoint of the pay range the position is assigned to for employees who receive a "fully satisfactory" rating, or
- ii. 4% of the midpoint of the pay range the position is assigned to for employees who receive an "outstanding" rating.
- iii. 3% of the midpoint of pay range the position is assigned to for Legislative Assistants in the Common Council – Office of the City Clerk provided they are otherwise eligible.

7. Why are the increases based on the pay range minimums for Group A and based on the pay range midpoint for Group B?

The adjustments are designed to give employees at the low end of the pay ranges a higher percentage increase when compared to employees at the high end of the pay ranges. This is designed to bring the rates of pay of the lowest paid employees more in line with labor market rates and to minimize pay differentials between employees in the same classification performing at comparable levels of proficiency.

Official and symmetrical midpoints across pay ranges only exist for Group B positions. Since the standards and requirements for eligibility for adjustments are stricter for Group B, so should the amount of the salary adjustment.

8. Why are the increases for Group B employees not effective until Pay Period 14 of 2016?

Eligibility for salary adjustments for these employees will be based on the results of performance appraisals. The form and supporting guidelines and training needed to implement such procedures across City departments will be developed early in 2016 for implementation pay period 14, of 2016.

9. Are the salary adjustments pensionable and base-building?

Yes, employees who are eligible for adjustments will receive pensionable and base building adjustments up to the maximum of their pay ranges.

10. Are employees at the maximum of their pay ranges or higher as a result of pension offset eligible for the salary adjustments?

Employees at or above the maximum of their pay ranges will be eligible for non-pensionable lump sum payments instead of base building salary adjustments. DER will develop administrative guidelines establishing when and how non-pensionable lump sum payments will be made.

11. Why are probationary employees ineligible for salary adjustments?

Probationary employees have not attained regular status in their positions and are therefore not eligible for salary increases.

12. When do employees serve a probationary period?

Under the rules of the City Service Commission employees serve probationary periods when regularly appointed, or when transferred, promoted or demoted to a position not previously held in the city service.

13. Since employees who are exempt from civil service provisions don't serve a probationary period, are they eligible for salary adjustments any time after appointment?

An employee's eligibility for salary advancement after the initial appointment or promotion is contingent upon the successful completion of 26 biweekly pay periods of active service.

14. What are the requirements for eligibility for a salary adjustment?

To be eligible for salary adjustments, non-probationary employees in Group A must be in good standing as documented in an "Employee Assessment" form to be completed by their supervisor. Employees who are subject of a performance improvement plan (PIP) or have received discipline during the 6 month period immediately preceding their anniversary date shall be ineligible for a salary adjustment.

Non-probationary employees in Group B must receive a “fully satisfactory” or “outstanding” rating as part of a performance merit plan established by DER. Employees who are subject of a performance improvement plan (PIP) or have received discipline during the 6 month period immediately preceding their “performance appraisal “ in pay period 14 of 2016 (for employees with anniversary dates during pay periods 1-13) or within six months of their anniversary date for employees with anniversary dates during pay periods 14 – 26) shall be ineligible for a salary adjustment.

15. If an employee is ineligible due to a performance Improvement Plan or disciplinary action within the six month period of his/her anniversary date, is he/she unable to receive an adjustment in 2016 overall?

In 2016 an employee’s eligibility may be re-established after six months of completion of PIP or imposition of discipline. Any resulting salary adjustment will be effective after six months of completion of PIP or imposition of discipline and will not be retroactive. This provision will not exist in subsequent years.

16.If an employee is deemed ineligible because of a disciplinary action and a grievance is pending when he/she is due the “assessment” or the “evaluation” is the process on hold pending the grievance process?

Yes. If grievance is overturned employee will receive adjustment per eligibility guidelines.

17.If a disciplinary action is overturned in the grievance process, is the employee eligible for the salary adjustment?

Yes

18.If a disciplinary action is held in abeyance, is the employee eligible for the adjustment?

Yes

19.A manager or supervisor who fails to complete employee assessments and/or evaluations for his/her employees is not eligible for salary adjustments on his/her anniversary date. Does this mean that the manager is forfeiting his/her increase?

No, but that manager will not be eligible for an adjustment until he/she has completed all of the overdue assessments and evaluations.

20.Will employees who are deemed ineligible have an opportunity for an appeal?

Yes, departments will be required to implement an administrative review procedure when employees are deemed ineligible for salary adjustments based on a determination that the employee is not in good standing. Employees who are denied an adjustment based on an

“unsatisfactory” performance evaluation may ask for an administrative review from the DER.

21. Do these provisions apply to employees in career ladders?

No, employees who are part of an approved Career Ladder are not eligible for salary adjustments allowed under Common Council File # 151209. Pay progression practices for these employees in career ladders are generally determined by credentials, licensing and performance standards.

22. Who else is excluded from these pay progression provisions?

Employee groups who are ineligible for salary adjustments allowed under Common Council File # 151209 include:

- Assistant City Attorneys
- Intermittent and Hourly employees
- Members of Boards and Commissions
- Elected Officials
- Employees of the Employee’s Retirement System whose compensation is determined by the Pension Board
- Sworn members of MPD and MFD who are represented
- Operation Driver Workers in DPW

23. Are Warning Notices considered disciplinary actions for purposes of determining eligibility for salary increases?

Not for employees in Group A. However, employees in Group B who receive a warning notice will be deemed ineligible.

24. What is the difference between an “employee assessment” for Group A and a “performance evaluation” for Group B?

An employee assessment will determine whether an employee in Group A is considered to be in “good standing”. The form, similar to the City’s current probationary form, requires an assessment of an employee’s performance and behavior in five areas: productivity, knowledge, initiative, dependability, inter-personal skills. Departments will be able to add up to two additional factors that may be relevant for specific jobs.

A performance appraisal in contrast will require an assessment of the employee’s ability to perform critical and specific job elements and meet performance objectives and standards.

25. Are Elected Officials eligible for these salary adjustments?

No.